

Erie County Fire Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

September 28, 2006

Call to Order & Opening Prayer: The meeting was called to order by Chairman G Wittington who also led with an opening prayer.

Roll Call:

Chairman Gerard Wittington	Present	Co-Chairman Douglas Larkin	Present
Sec./Treasurer John Wicka	Present	Dennis Allen	Excused
Bruce Atkins	Present	Charles Bethge	Present
William Boldt	Present	Todd Catalano	Present
Donald Connolly	Excused	James Fyock	Present
Dennis Gibbs	Excused	Christopher Higgins	Present
Daniel Kamman	Present	Michael Lombardo	Absent
James Lawida	Excused	Richard Litfin	Present
Richard Mariani	Excused	Steve Matisz	Present
Robert Newell	Excused	James Pluta	Present
Bret Rider	Absent	Ronald Rozler	Present
Edward Saturnus	Excused	Charles Stewart	Present
William G. Szewc	Present		

Also present were Commissioner Kevin Comerford and Deputy Coordinator Tiger Schmittendorf.

Reading of Minutes of Previous Meeting: A motion was made by C Bethge, seconded by D Larkin, to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was duly voted on and carried.

Reading of Correspondence: The correspondence that was received was read by the Chairman and held for either old or new business.

Commissioner's & Committee Reports

Commissioner's Report: Commissioner Comerford reported on the following:

- **Capital Project:** He had the opportunity to work with Chairman Whittington, J Wicka and others to put together a proposed Capital Project budget request for the 2007 budget. He is optimistic that the proposals to fund 800 MHz and new facilities at the Cheektowaga facility will be accepted by the legislature which will fund these projects over three years.
- **Meeting with Cheektowaga Chiefs:** He met with the Cheektowaga Chiefs to discuss the condition of the Cheektowaga facility and to discuss other major initiatives. He was accompanied by Chairman Whittington and Deputy Commissioner Skibitsky. He was pleased with a presentation prepared by the Chiefs and is looking at the possibility of using this program to present to others to bolster the case for funds to rebuild the training facilities with the legislature. There is an agenda that will need to be pursued to accomplish this and it would help if all of the FAB members were involved in getting the message out.
- **Alerting:** The project continues to move ahead. Demonstration equipment has been installed and there is a schedule for all fire stations to have their equipment installed beginning in October. The project remains on target for completion by the end of the year.
- **800 MHz:** He met with SWN today. The agenda to being testing in April 2007 remains in place. See his earlier comments on the Capital Project regarding funding for the project.
- **Department of Public Safety:** There is a meeting scheduled for October 18, 2006 with the Public Safety Committee when the issue will again be discussed. There are some anticipated changes from the original plan which may be more acceptable to the entire legislature and relate to the appointment of Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners. The time and location will be announced soon and will be coordinated with the Chairman. He reported that representatives of law enforcement may be opposed to modifications in the plan as they feel there needs to be a way to avoid "friends & family" politics in the appointment process. There was a general discussion and C Bethge made a motion, seconded by J Pluta, that the FAB go on record of supporting a revised proposal that the Board of Trustees overseeing the Department of Public Safety would present three (3) names for each appointed position with the legislature having final approval for appointment to the position. The motion was under question and discussed further. After the discussion, the motion was duly voted on and carried.
- **EMS Move to the Department of Health:** Commissioner Comerford said this proposal came from the proposed Charter Changes. He reported that structurally wise, EMS stays with the Department of

Public Safety. A discussion followed and it was determined that this is not a major issue that would cause problems that cannot be worked through.

- PSAP Consolidation: There was a general discussion regarding the county's approach to having municipalities move their dispatching to the new Public Safety Campus. Commissioner Comerford reported new radio equipment is being installed and there is a time-table as to when it will be operational. J Wicka reiterated his opinion, which was shared previously with the Commissioner, that with the major communication projects that the county is currently involved in (e.g. alerting & 800 MHz) does not permit the county to take on another major project of consolidating dispatching at this time in an effective manner. He also stated that issues previously reported about problems in Akron/Newsted, along with other reported issues with wireless 9-1-1 calls being mishandled, adds to this uncertainty. R Rozler stated there is a lot of information being circulated among other town supervisors regarding merging/consolidating PSAPs into the new campus. The commissioner again advised that he is not soliciting any municipality to move into the campus but they are fielding inquiries and there is a strong desire from Hamburg Supervisor Walters to abolish its operation and have the county take over this function. He also stated he knows there is media attention to this. He confirmed that there is an understanding that the county would take over Hamburg's dispatching for a five (5) year period at no cost to the town. He said he believes this is possible due to anticipated savings on the elimination of costs to communicate with Hamburg and other centers. The county would also take 10 of the current dispatchers. Everyone agreed that there will be extensive and detailed discussions on this in the future.
- Amherst/Akron Questions: D Larkin questioned when Mark Winters from CPS will report back regarding the previously reported and discussed problem that occurred in Akron/Newsted with the misdirected calls and dispatch problems. Chairman Whittington advised that he was under the impression that a meeting was held between Mr. Winters and the Akron Chief. Commissioner Comerford advised he would check into this and let D Larkin know the outcome of his findings.

Commissioner Comerford asked to be excused and the board members thanked him for his attendance and sharing of the information.

Deputy Commissioner's Report: Deputy Coordinator Schmittendorf reported for Commissioner McCullough the following:

- Facility Cleanup: There has been significant progress in getting things cleaned up and repaired at the Cheektowaga facility. Chairman Whittington complimented Deputy Commissioner McCullough and Tiger for their efforts in getting this accomplished.
- Forcible Entry Props: The new props are now installed and were built by the prisoners. About 200 correction officers were at the facility for their training and brought the three props. They are very useful for the Firefighter 1 (FF1) classes. Good relations are being made with the Fire Response Teams from the WNY correctional facilities and they are donating lumber and other materials to construct the props.
- The Live Burn Deck was rebuilt by the prisoners and the materials were donated by Home Depot. The building is back in full operation.
- Chestnut Ridge & Amherst Clean-up: It is hoped that additional assistance can be obtained from corrections to get the other facilities cleaned up. It is hoped to get Chestnut Ridge done by the end of November and Amherst done in the spring.
- Training: Tiger reported training is going well and only a couple of courses needed to be cancelled due to lack of registrants. He will tally up the total hours for the year-to-date and report back at the next meeting so it can be determined what training can be scheduled for the winter period and early spring. Tiger reported that they are considering starting a few FF1 courses in February so hands-on evolutions can be done in late March. They are on target to have 14 FF1 courses completed from April 2006 thru March 2007.
- EVOC Question: J Fyock asked for a clarification regarding the process for requesting and scheduling EVOC courses. Tiger provided the explanation.

Officer Reports:

Chairman's Report: Chairman Whittington reported on the meeting held September 14 which was an overview of the communication initiatives and MOC1 and TEK (see attached). MOC2 and MOC3 are in the process of being built and once placed in service will be stationed in different parts of the county. C Bethge reminded everyone to let people know about this equipment and its availability.

The Chairman also advised he attended several meetings on behalf of the FAB which included EC Chiefs, ECFDOA and the Cheektowaga Chiefs. He stated he agreed with Commissioner Comerford's assessment about the Cheektowaga Chiefs presentation about the training facility.

He discussed the funding information he has regarding the 800 MHz project and advised how the anticipated funding shortfall is being addressed in the 2007, 2008 and 2009 proposed budgets. He will ask C Bethge to work with him to prepare packets of this information for all FAB members so they can present this information to their respective legislators in order to get their support. He stressed the importance that all legislators must be given this information and why it is important to fire safety and public safety overall.

He also requested Tiger update the website to include all the recent meeting minutes of the FAB. Tiger advised he will check this as he thought it was up to date.

Co-Chairman's Report: D Larkin had nothing of significance to report.

Secretary' Report: J Wicka advised a card was sent to the family of Jack Burger expressing our condolences on Jack's passing. He also thanked everyone for their assistance in making the visit to the Fireboat Cotter a pleasurable one and especially acknowledged Commissioner Lombardo and the crew of the Cotter. We were made to feel very welcome. He also reported he spoke very recently with former Commissioner Walters, who is undergoing treatment to battle cancer. He asked everyone to keep Mike in thought and prayer.

School Committee: J Pluta reported he met with B Newell, the Chairman and others and discussed the goals of the committee. They are looking at the possibility of using county instructors to cover gaps in training at individual fire companies (e.g. OSHA, pump operator refresher, etc.) and he requested input from the other FAB members on this idea. There was a general discussion about the merits of such a proposal along with awarding certificates for the completion of the refresher training. The Chairman stated he would support such an endeavor as it gives the Fire Safety Division more credibility when stating our needs with the legislature and others. The general consensus was that it is a positive initiative and it should be considered and that these trainings start this winter. C Bethge made a motion, seconded by B Atkins, to have the School Committee advance this idea with Deputy Commissioner McCullough and Deputy Coordinator Schmittendorf and prepare a formal proposal to be presented on at a future FAB meeting. The motion was duly voted on and carried.

Drill Towers Committee: No report.

Radio Committee: Chairman Whittington reported on the following:

- Alerting: The three (3) firehall demo installations are done. All halls are available for anyone to come in and see how an installation will look. The installations at all the other fire stations will begin the week of October 16 and continue through the week of December 10. The pagers are on order and one of the two departments who chose not to go with the program may be reconsidering their decision. R Rozler is working with Depew on this. PSAP training is scheduled to begin soon and there are discussions that county instructors may be used to conduct the training. Who will pay them is still in question but regardless, they will get paid for doing the training.
- 800 MHz: Several departments still have not completed the most recent simple survey. He read the list of departments and requested that the FAB members who represent these departments contact them to get this survey completed.
- SWN Field Testing: An invitation was received from SWN to participate in its operational field testing. Testing will start in April 2007 and continue through the 3rd quarter of the year. Ten entities are requested and the FAB is being asked to have one person have a radio installed in his vehicle and participate in the testing. By consensus of the board, the Chairman was designated as the person who should take the position. It is anticipated that R Rozler will also be asked to participate on the law enforcement side of the testing.

Legislation & Fire Prevention: The Chairman advised there was a lot of legislation affecting the fire service and especially fire districts. Fire companies are now required to file annual audits with the town.

Budget & Wall of Fame: B Atkins reported on the telephone conference meeting he had with D Larkin as everyone else had previous commitments. Some issues were discussed and he will schedule another meeting prior to the start of the next full FAB meeting.

Rules & Mutual Aid: The Chairman advised there was nothing of significance to report.

Erie County Chiefs: W Boldt reported the Chiefs met two weeks ago. All the issues from the recent FAB meetings were reported on and discussed. They will conduct a training seminar in March 07 with a probable live evolution. They plan on working with FASNY on this. Chief Hawes from Akron addressed the group and it was positively received as it is anticipated that what was learned from these experiences will avoid future problems.

Erie County Vol. Firemen's Assoc.: No report.

Fire District Officers: C Bethge reported that the Law & Leg seminar was held this last weekend in Batavia and was well attended. There were 124 attendees from 13 counties. In addition, there was a vendor show on September 27 at Sheridan Park and the attendance there was also decent. It is anticipated that this will become an annual event.

Fire Police: B Atkins reported the next meeting will be October 17 at Hillcrest. At their last meeting, six county legislators attended and many questions were answered about alerting and 800 MHz. It was a very productive and educational night.

Old Business: There was nothing to discuss.

New Business:

New Officer Orientation: Tiger suggested that we consider reviving the New Officer Orientation training that was done a few years back which could be held this coming January. This would be worthwhile since there have been many changes in communications, regulations and other areas over the last few years. This could be conducted in a "trade show" style venue. There was a general discussion with the consensus being that this would be a worthwhile endeavor.

Treasurer's Report: J Wicka reported the following:

Previous net worth was \$356.86 and expenditures of \$97.58. Tonight's receipts were \$14.00 for a new net worth of \$273.28. T Catalano made a motion, seconded by W Boldt, to accept the report as presented. The motion was duly voted on and carried.

Good of the Organization: W Boldt gave a presentation on the Americorp and scholarship program being offered for community work done regarding public safety and community response to emergencies. He will be presenting more information on this in the future but wanted everyone to be aware of what the program is about and how it will help the fire service and fire departments.

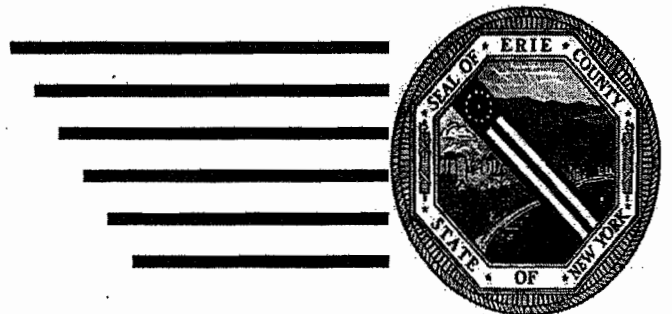
Adjournment

With nothing further to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 with the next meeting scheduled for October 26, 2006 at 7:00 pm at the fire academy.

Respectfully submitted
John R. Wicka
Secretary/Treasurer

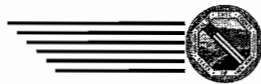
Erie County Fire Advisory Board

September 14, 2006



Erie County Department of Public Safety

Communications Plan and Asset Orientation



Overview

- The Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TIC Plan) has been created for the City of Buffalo, County of Erie, and County of Niagara Urban Area. The City of Buffalo, County of Erie, and County of Niagara Urban Area was established during a kick-off meeting, which was held on August 18, 2005. Federal, State, and various local officials were in attendance.

Agencies Served by TIC Plan

- Emergency Management
- Emergency Medical Services
- Fire Service
- Government Administration
- HAZMAT
- Health Care
- Law Enforcement
- Private Security
- Public Health
- Public Safety Communications
- Public Service/Works
- Public Transportation
- Non-Government Organizations

Agencies Served by TIC Plan

- The TIC Plan identifies 291 agencies located in the Urban Area.
- Canadian agencies are part of the International Joint Contingency plan and are considered an additional resource to this TIC Plan.

TIC Plan Points of Contact

Primary:
Kevin J. Comerford
Commissioner of Central Police
UAWG Chair
45 Elm St. Buffalo, NY 14203
716 858-6365
comerford@erie.gov

Alternate:
Kevin C. Hughes
Erie County Central Police Services
TIC Plan Project Manager
45 Elm St. Buffalo, 14203
716 858-4832
hughesk@erie.gov

Governance

- The Buffalo Erie Niagara Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan addresses interoperable communications equipment and planning for three urban areas identified by the Department of Homeland Security's Urban Areas Security Initiative. Though the City of Buffalo, County of Erie, and County of Niagara areas are unique with their own interoperable communication needs, their proximity to one another, their large population, and their existing government structure make it necessary to develop a consolidated TIC Plan for these areas.

Governance

- The TIC Plan was developed under the authority of the City of Buffalo, County of Erie, and County of Niagara Urban Area Working Group Executive Board on February 3, 2006

Urban Area Working Group Executive Board

- Communications
- Emergency Management
- Emergency Medical Services
- Fire/Rescue
- Information Technology
- Investigations and Intelligence
- Law Enforcement Response
- Public Health
- Public Works
- Training
- Transportation

Governance

- Executive Board appointed members to the Regional Interoperable Communications Subcommittee, which now serves as an advisory committee to the Board.

Regional Interoperable Communications Subcommittee

- Kevin Hughes, *Chair*, Communications Project Manager,
County of Erie
- John Adolf, *Vice-Chair*, Coordinator, A.L.S. Systems,
County of Erie
- Robert Andrycha, *Technical Working Group Chair*,
Radio Supervisor, City of Buffalo Fire Department,
County of Erie
- Gerard Whittington, Jr., *Operations Working Group
Chair*, Dept. of Public Safety, County of Erie

Responsibilities of the Governing Body

- Establish and manage an interoperable communications
subcommittee
- Maintain and update this TIC Plan
- Adopt final solutions and direct implementation
- Establish training requirements (to include estimated cost) in support
of this TIC Plan
- Create chains of command for interoperable communications
including trained Communications Unit Leaders
- Initiate and maintain Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs),
Plans, and Sharing Agreements for interoperable communications
for execution by City, Municipal, County, and State Agency and
Authority governing body executives
- Notify agencies of regular interoperable equipment/solutions testing
and assist agencies with test evaluation and the dissemination of
results
- Continually re-evaluate regional requirements as technology evolves
and circumstances dictate

Interoperable Communication Communications Unit Leaders COML

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Interoperable Communication Communications Unit Leaders COML

Communications Unit Leader (COML) Responsibility

- The COML has the responsibility to make recommendations concerning communications structure and organization to the Incident Commander. Once approved by the Incident Commander, these actions include implementing interoperable solutions, frequencies, equipment, and systems during an actual event.
- The COML must be part of the planning process and determine the communications resources required to support the objectives and tactics of the Incident Action Plan, as it develops.

Duties of the Communications Unit Leaders

- Receive Incident Action Plan (IAP). Determine needs to support the IAP
- Provide necessary technical staff to support the operation
- Design communications systems to meet incident operational needs.
- Field installation of required communications equipment.

Duties of the Communications Unit Leaders

- In conjunction with command, develop installation priorities while adhering to safety standards regarding communications needs of tactical personnel.
- Assign communications equipment.
- Establish Incident Communications Center (ICC).

Duties of the Communications Unit Leaders

- Manage Operations of the ICC.
- Coordinate frequencies, activities, and resources with the communications coordinators for other incidents in the region.
- Initiate and maintain accurate records on all communications equipment.

Duties of the Communications Unit Leaders

- Perform operational test of communications equipment throughout the duration of the incident as needed.
- Interact and coordinate with appropriate incident commanders, unit leaders and operations personnel.

Interoperable Communication Assets

Interoperable Communication Assets

- Cached Radios
- Gateways
- Shared Channels
- Shared Systems

Cached Radios

- Cache radios, also known as "swapped radios," refer to maintaining a cache of standby radios that can be deployed to support regional incidents.
- These radios may be from a regional cache or from a participating agency. This allows all responders to use a common, compatible set of radios during an incident.

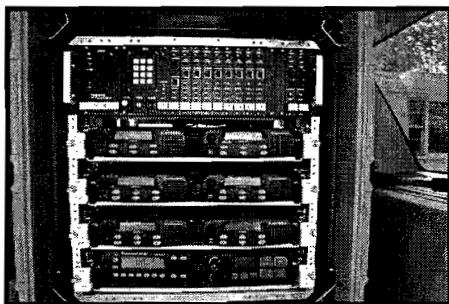
Cached Radios

- Erie County has a UHF portable radio cache (6) located on MOC1.
- Erie County has a VHF High band portable radio cache (6) located on MOC1.
- City of Buffalo Fire Department has a UHF portable radio cache (6) located at the Fire Alarm Office.
- Genesee County has an 800 MHz portable radio cache (12) located on the County Haz-Mat Truck identified as ESU-1.
- Niagara County has a UHF portable radio cache (6) located on County Haz-Mat Truck #1.

Gateways

- "Gateway" systems interconnect channels of disparate systems (whether on different frequency bands or radio operating modes), allowing first responders using their existing radios and channels to be interconnected with the channels of other users outside of their agency.

ACU-1000



Gateway Locations

- Erie County MOC 1
- Town of Orchard Park
- Town of Amherst
- Niagara County
- Genesee County

Shared Channels

- "Shared channels" refer to common frequencies, channels and talkgroups (such as those of a participating agency) that have been established and are programmed into radios to provide interoperable communications among agencies.
- Several local, regional, state, and federal shared interoperable communication or mutual aid channels are available.
- Detailed information on our locally shared channels will be provided to each public safety agency upon request.

Shared Channels in the City of Buffalo, County of Erie, and County of Niagara Urban Area

Erie County Fire F-2
Erie County Fire F-4 / Niagara Co Fire F-1
SEMO Intercounty
VHF Op's 1 (new interop)
VHF Op's 2 (new interop)
VHF Op's 3 (new interop)
MERS 340
MERS 325
MERS 175
MERS 715

Shared Channels

CPS Countywide
CPS 730
Statewide Intersystem
Nationwide Intersystem
SEMO Direct
SEMO Repeater
CPS Countywide
Buffalo Police Ch1
Buffalo Fire Channel 4

Shared Channels

UHF Interop-1 (new interop) Buffalo Fire
UHF Interop-2 (new interop) All Agency
Niagara County Fireground 1
Niagara County Fireground 2
Niagara County Fireground 3
Niagara County Fireground 4

Nationwide Shared Channels

- Available Nationwide Channels identified by DHS for use by public safety agencies for Statewide or Federal Mutual Aid responses.

V-TAC
U-TAC
I-TAC

Potential Uses

- Disaster, large scale incident or extreme emergency where imminent danger exists to life or property requiring mutual aid or interagency communications
- Other incidents requiring the response of multiple agencies
- Pre-planned events requiring mutual aid or interagency communications
- Incidents involving a single agency where supplemental communications are needed for agency use
- Drills, tests and exercises

Interoperable Communications Request

- The Incident Commander will determine when an extraordinary situation exists that requires use of a regional interoperability resource and notify.
- Erie County Emergency Services 24 hour dispatch center at 716-898-3696.

Information to provide

- The Following lists the information needed to provide to the dispatch center at the time of an activation request:

User's agency
On-scene agencies requiring interoperability
Reason for request/type of event, i.e. tornado, etc.
Equipment required
Expected duration of event
Location required/access information
Incident point of contact
User/requestor and/or servicing dispatch contact phone number

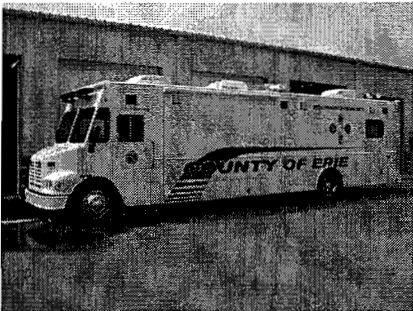
COML Procedures

- MERS will contact the appropriate COML
- Advise them of request
- COML will contact requesting agency to determine appropriate resources needed for the incident.
- Response of COML and communications assets will depend upon resources needed at the incident.

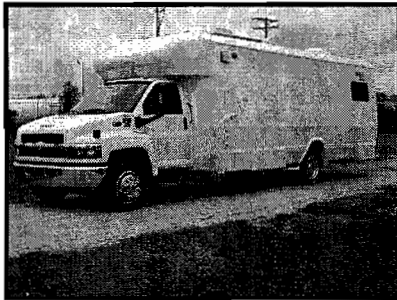
Amateur / Ham Radio Communications

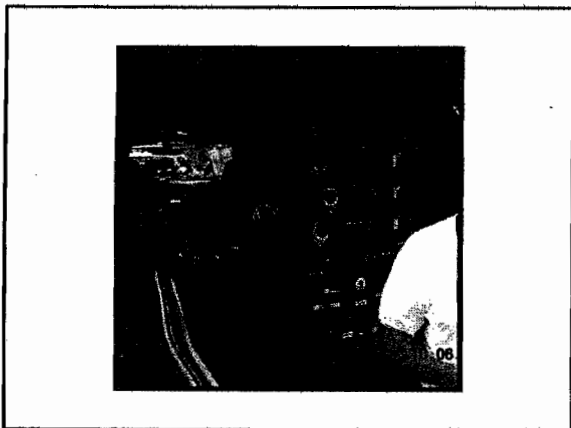
- Based on information contained in the 2004 Cross Border Contingency Plan, amateur radio operators in both the United States and Canada affiliated with local R.A.C.E.S. (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service) organizations will be activated when necessary to assist with interoperable communications.
- Currently amateur radios are located in the County of Erie and County of Niagara Emergency Operations Centers and Mobile Command Vehicles

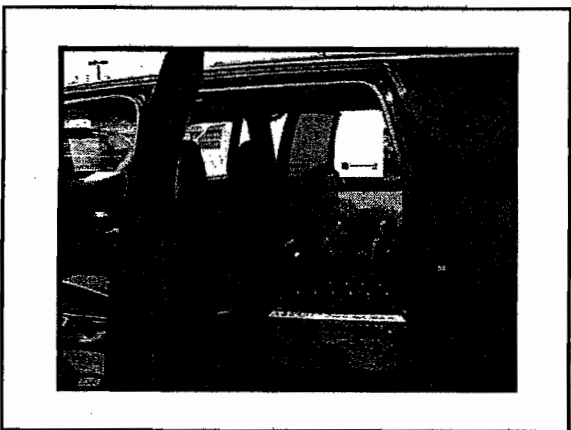
Erie County MOC-1

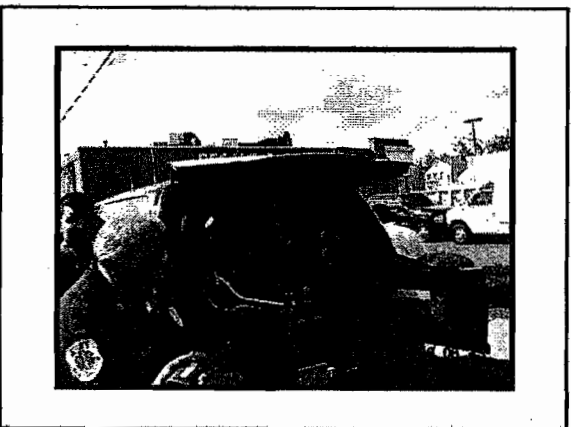


Communications Vehicles









Thank You

- Please contact the Erie County
Department of Public Safety COML's with
any questions:

Jerry Whittington Jr.: 716-858-4799

or

Kevin Hughes: 716-858-4832

URGENT



County of Erie

JOEL A. GIAMBRA

County Executive

Department of Public Safety

KEVIN J. COMERFORD
Commissioner

45 Elm Street – Buffalo, NY 14203
716/ 858-6365 – FAX / 858-6039
www.erie.gov

We would like to thank you for your prompt feedback and participation for the Erie County Alerting project. It is now critical that you complete the 800mhz survey we sent recently.

Please complete the attached survey and fax back to 858-7937

The following Agencies have not yet completed and sent their surveys for the
800mhz Radio System.

Alden Volunteer Fire Dept.
Bellevue Volunteer Fire Co.
BNIA-Crash-Fire-Rescue
Clarence Center Volunteer Fire Co.
Collins Volunteer Fire Co.
Ellwood Volunteer Fire Co.
Getzville Volunteer Fire Co. Inc.
Gowanda Volunteer Fire Co.
Kenilworth Volunteer Fire Co.
Lancaster Volunteer Fire Dept.
Newton Abbott Volunteer Fire Co. In
North Bailey Volunteer Fire Co.
North Collins Volunteer Fire Dist.
Reservation Volunteer Fire Co.
Sheridan Park Volunteer Fire Co.
Snyder Volunteer Fire Dept.
South Line Volunteer Fire Dist. #10
Woodlawn Volunteer Fire Co.

It is imperative that we receive your 800mhz survey back by Wednesday September 6, 2006 so that we can have an accurate count of radioes needed.

- Fax back to 716-858-7937
- For further information call 716-858-4827 or email 800@erie.gov